



Newsletter ~ Vallabh Vidya Mandir ~



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An Expression...

“There are two ways of spreading the light; to be the candle or the mirror that receives it.” - Edith Wharton

Around the world the month of January is dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. Both of these great leaders had much love and compassion for the mankind. They were truly walking forward with a torch in their hand. Their strength, resilience and vision has given the 21st century leaders a benchmark.

Becky Haugen wrote - “Leadership requires wisdom. A good leader will listen to the opinions of others to discover the knowledge and learn about the resources available to problem solve and find the solution. The leader will sort through the facts, fiction and find knowledge that is useful to help find a creative solution. And like any good expedition, the leader will guide the team to resolve the problem expeditiously, using the best tools and resources around to finally address the issues. Good leaders do not work in a vacuum and neither are they alone on the playing field. Rather they know

how to extend the resources of the talent and apply the talent to the situation at hand. They do not look at each resource as inadequate; rather they take what is available and find ways to mine the creativity and talent in new ways.

Gandhi had the quality of a great leader. Few men have ever had as much of an effect on our world as Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948), though he used the message of peace and love, rather than war and destruction. Once a prominent lawyer in South Africa, Gandhi gave up practicing law and returned to India in order to help ease the suffering of the repressed people of his homeland. Gandhi's love for people and his religious fervor made him a revolutionary in many of his ideas and actions. He desired to see India freed from British rule in a bloodless revolution, similar to the Glorious Revolution of Seventeenth Century England. Knowing that violence only begets violence, he began the practice of passive resistance, or as he called it, Satyagraha which means holding onto truth. In his famous Salt March of 1930, Gandhi and thousands of others marched to a coast where salt lay

on the beaches to protest the British prohibition against the Indians making their own salt. Though many were beaten, arrested and killed, no one fought back.

Over the course of his life he led three major crusades, rallied support for nonviolent strikes, urged Indians to boycott anything British, and championed women's rights. Gandhi exemplified many characteristics of a great leader. His love for the people of India was boundless; he wanted nothing more than to serve and help them. Always putting others above himself, he sought to make himself even lower than the lowest member of the Hindu caste system. One of his most admirable qualities was that he led by example and never preached that which he was not willing to do himself.

Seniors Tea Party

Seniors (Age 62+) meet Youth (Age 14+)

February 16th 3-5pm
Venue – VPSS Vallabh Hall

(RSVP kikanis@earthlink.net)



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A common thread between Gandhi and many other great leaders was that no matter what he did, he did it to the best of his ability. He once said: No matter how insignificant the thing you have to do, do it as well as you can, give it as much of your care and attention as you would give to the thing you regard as most important. For it will be by those things that you shall be judged. He gave up his life and material possessions, fasted, toiled and suffered for his people and their cause. He showed that passiveness is not synonymous with weakness, and became a leader in the truest sense of the word. Perhaps Gandhi's greatest contribution to the world continued long after his assassination in 1948. Few realize that had it not been for his influence, we may have never witnessed in this country (USA) Martin Luther King Junior's 'I have a dream..' speech, the lunch counter sit-ins, Rosa Parks, or Nelson Mandela's struggle against anti-apartheid oppression in South Africa. These people and many more that have followed in his footsteps bear witness to Gandhi's leadership ability and his legacy that will continue for many centuries.

Gandhi's non-violence movement had influenced Nelson Mandela as well as Martin Luther King Jr. When we review MLK's life and death it is appropriate to draw inspiration from the life and leadership of one whose vision and commitments remain unparalleled in modern America.

..VVM Annual Show

*April 27th 2008
(3-5 pm)*

Please Mark Your Calendars
&
Invite Friends & Family

It is important to review how he wished to be remembered: In one of his speeches he said: 'If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. Every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize, which isn't important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards that are not important. Tell them not to mention where I went to school. I'd like somebody to mention that day, that Martin Luther King, Jr. tried to

give his life serving others. I'd like for somebody to say that day, that Martin Luther King, Jr. tried to love somebody. I want you to be able to say that day, that I did try to feed the hungry. And I want you to be able to say that day, that I did try, in my life, to clothe those who were naked. I want you to say, on that day, that I did try, in my life, to visit those who were in prison. I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity. True to his word he left behind a committed life, a life committed to the struggle for justice. When we read his words, and ponder the life of Martin Luther King we cannot help but feel uplifted, our hearts filled with a sense of joy.

With such leaders to guide us, I hope each one of us will get inspired and do our level best to light a candle to illuminate the darkness within and around us, to bring a joyous life for ourselves and for others.

Here is a quote from *George B Adams* - "There is no such thing as a 'self-made man'. We are made up of thousands of others.

Everyone who have ever done a kind deed for us, or spoken one word of encouragement to us, has



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entered into the make-up of our character and of our thoughts, as well as our success”.
(Resources: *Gandhi – A Great Leader*,
Martin Luther King Jr. - Encyclopedia)

Phalguni Kikani

The barber said, “I do not believe God exists for if he did, there would be neither suffering nor pain.”

The customer thought for a moment, but did not respond. After the barber was done, the customer left the shop. On his way, he saw a man in the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard. The customer turned back and entered the barber-shop again.

He said to the barber, you know what? Barbers do not exist.

“How can you say that?” asked the surprised barber. I am here, and I am a barber. And I just worked on you!

“No! The customer exclaimed, Barbers don’t exist for if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside.”

Ah, but barbers do exist! It is the people who do not come to them.

Exactly, affirmed the customer. God, too, does exist! What happens is people don’t look for Him. That’s why there is so much pain and suffering in the world.

If you feel that the proof of God’s existence is a life that is all joy and no troubles, then you are not living a life at all. It is in your hand to find God if you have faith that He exists, for even God helps only those who help themselves. God is a support system for those who have faith. You have to take the initiative to set things right and in times of hardships prayers will give you the strength to go on. It is you who has to feel the divinity in what you do and that will be ample proof of God’s existence.

(Personal Compilation)

Sureshbhai Patel

.. FunFair (Carnival)

VVM Parents wish to invite you for a Fun-Fair On

March 22nd 2008

(11 am – 3 pm)

At VPSS Temple Premises

Games, Food, Activities

Mark Your Calendars

The March is On..

“Faith is knowledge within the heart, beyond the reach of proof” – Khalil Gibran

“Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of GOD whose ways one may not understand at the time” – Oswald Chambers

A man went to a barber-shop for a routine haircut. They entered into a conversation on the existence of God.

VVM Annual Show..

Practice Session.... Yes! The word is out. The 3rd Annual VVM Show will be held on April 27, 2008. Each child will be asked to participate in 1 to 2 items. The teachers will be asking for your co-operation for extra practice hours. Pls work with your teachers to make this a success.

Principal



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Students Corner...

Wouldn't you say this is sweet from the 6-year old **Sonali Puri**?



VVM Yoga group took part in Surya Namaskara Yajna organized by the Hindu Swayam Sevak Sangh & Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America in conjunction with Sankranti. The target for the year was 1 million Surya Namaskara's nationally with 7000 participants in 2 weeks between Jan 12 -27, 2008. Congratulations!



...Get Smart

Chess Club

Classes will be held on February 10th and February 17th

Contact Neelay at 713-723-5892

Bring your own Chess Board
Free for VVM Students
(Ages 8 & Up)

Students are encouraged to submit articles, poems, reflections and experiences for VVM Newsletter.
Send to kikanis@earthlink.net